

II. RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

A. Geographical Setting

This section describes the historical and current state of resources and management activities in the CPNA.

1. Physical Setting



Snow on the Temblors

The CPNA encompasses two plains: the Elkhorn and the Carrizo. The Elkhorn Plain, nearly 20 miles long and two miles wide, lies at the eastern base of the Temblor Range. Elevation ranges from 2,300 feet at the southern end and gently rises to 2,500 feet toward the north where it gradually terminates with its convergence with the Temblor Range and the San Andreas Fault. Movements of the San Andreas Fault formed the Elkhorn and Panorama Hills that separate the Elkhorn Plain from the Carrizo Plain. The

Carrizo Plain, located west of the San Andreas Fault, extends to the eastern base of the Caliente Range. It occupies the central portion of the Natural Area and is a high elevation internal drainage basin. The valley floor is roughly 50 miles long and six miles wide with an average altitude of 2,000 feet.

The Caliente Range, rising to 5,104 feet, is a prominent backdrop to the west while the Temblor Range to the east rises to about 4,300 feet. The southern end of the Caliente Range bends east to parallel the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province.



Soda Lake is a 3,000 acre salt encrusted playa about five miles long and a mile wide. In this arid environment, intense rainfall can produce sheet floods, and does not readily percolate into the ground. The vast majority of this runoff flows into Soda Lake, and in wet winters, water can be present until mid June. Normally the lake is dry by late April or early May.

Painted Rock, one of the most widely known landmarks within the CPNA, is an isolated monolithic outcrop consisting of cemented Miocene marine sandstone of the Painted Rock member of the Vaqueros Formation.



Southwest of the Caliente Range, the Cuyama Valley is deeply set between the Calientes and the Sierra Madre Mountains. This valley is approximately 40 miles long and six miles wide. The San Emigdio Mountains trend southeastward toward Mt. Pinos, part of the Transverse Ranges. East of the Temblors are a series of more or less distinct foothills leading toward the San Joaquin Valley. The Community of California Valley is located immediately north of the CPNA and is bordered to the west by the Freeborn Mountain and the La Panza Range.

2. Regional Planning

The CPNA is one site in a much larger area encompassing various ecosystems, land uses, and land ownership patterns. While the purpose of the CPNA may be different than the surrounding areas, it is important to consider it part of this larger region with common biological and physical resources and human values.

All known species and biotic communities found within the CPNA, both listed and unlisted, occur, though often to lesser extent or condition, outside its boundaries. Some migratory animals, such as bats, mountain plovers, and sandhill cranes, are clearly dependent on areas some distance away, yet all species exist without regard to political or management boundaries. Though distant lands are beyond the scope of this plan, management of shared biological elements will be coordinated, when consistent with the CPNA's mission, with local natural lands areas such as the Lokern and Semitropic Ridge preserves north of the Temblor range, and the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge located south of Highway 166 (Map #1). The CPNA will likely play a key role also in regional biological planning efforts including the San Joaquin Valley Floor Habitat Conservation Plan, the Bakersfield Metropolitan Habitat Conservation Plan, San Joaquin Bioregional Planning effort and the San Joaquin Valley multi-species recovery plan.

In addition to landowners, managers, and planners, many avocational and interest groups such as the California Native Plant Society, National Audubon Society, Native American groups, and educational institutions consider the CPNA to be pivotal in their regional pursuits. For example, resource specialists and researchers consider it an invaluable source of information that may be applied to other areas. Native American associations include Chumash, Yokuts, and Salinan groups from the Central Coast, Southern Coast and Central Valley. Coordination with Native Americans has centered around the use of Painted Rock and proposed activities that may affect cultural resources or traditional use areas. Federal responsibilities and mutual interests with the Native Americans will enhance a growing partnership for this region.

Recreationists travel from all directions to observe the CPNA's flora and fauna, hike, hunt, camp, explore, photograph, and picnic. They can pursue these activities in many of the surrounding areas of the Coast Range and along the Pacific Coast. However, the management emphasis offers unique opportunities for recreation, education and interpretation. The wildness of the area is its

main attraction, providing the visitor with a sense of solitude and communion with nature. Developed services for visitors, such as lodging, restaurants and target ranges, are located outside of the CPNA to both conserve the values of the area that visitors seek and to encourage private enterprise for local economies. Finally, feelings of personal "ownership", shared amongst people from many local and distant geographic locations through participation in management activities, heightens the social benefit of the CPNA and extends it beyond the immediate region.

